

Controlling Invasives & Promoting Natives through Collaborative Efforts in the Southeast

Session A: Targeting the Landscape/Green Industry *Wrap-up*

Introduction

- ❖ About 30 attendants from varied backgrounds i.e. Environmental Consultants, Landscapers, Nursery Owners, Government and Non-profit Organizations.
- ❖ Session Goal: to explore new perspectives on the role played by the Green Industry concerning invasive species and native plants and to have a productive dialog on how we can better communicate and work together.

Review of the Green Industry Survey – Kim Counts (Presentation available)

Targeting the Landscaping & Nursery Industries in SC: Perspectives from a Horticultural Consultant – Kari Whitley (Presentation Available)

Facilitated Discussion: Engagement Strategies and Moving Forward to Target Green Industry

Major perceived barriers:

- ❖ Economic
 - a. It is hard for Nurseries to survive on all natives
 - b. The “native section” at a nursery is a hard sell because natives do not show as well in that environment. This may not be the best way to promote natives.
 - c. Some of the listed invasives are best sellers for the nurseries.
- ❖ Communication
 - a. Between the Industry and the Organizations (govt & non-profit) - Preconceived notions that the Industry does not care and that the Organizations are just a bunch of hippie environmental fundamentalists.
 - b. Between the Industry and the Public – They are the experts and frontline for the consumer, their knowledge is passed on directly.
 - c. Between the Organizations and the Public – lack of educational programs to create less demand for invasives and more demand for natives that achieve true behavior change.
- ❖ Education
 - a. For all parties involved!

Solutions:

- ❖ Need to let go of preconceived ideas and have productive dialogues. This session is a good start!
- ❖ Organizations should learn and understand the language of the Industry AND work with Industry professionals who can translate into more meaningful information for the Industry.
- ❖ Education may be the solution for the economic barriers, if it could create more demand for the natives and less for the known invasives.
- ❖ Realistic Goals: We want to reduce the number of invasives being introduced and sold, the promotion of natives has benefits as well, but ornamentals will always be present and important to the industry.
- ❖ Develop educational workshops and materials.
- ❖ Have viable alter“natives” for consumers and Industry with clearly defined economic and environmental attributes.
- ❖ Present less overwhelming information when starting relationships with Industry professionals. Organizations have a tendency to throw out too much information and expect rapid responses. Start small with top 10 list of worst plants and work on it together.

Ideas/ Next Steps:

- ❖ More extensive and developed survey conducted in one uniform manner to garner more scientifically valuable information
- ❖ Survey people who attend native plant sales. Find out what plants are highly sought after and why consumers have chosen natives.
- ❖ Case Study of promoting natives in a nursery. Determine if labeling plants as native really helps them sell and how effective the natives section really is.
- ❖ Get to know the industry by attending landscape tradeshow and conferences.
- ❖ Target developments and review boards.